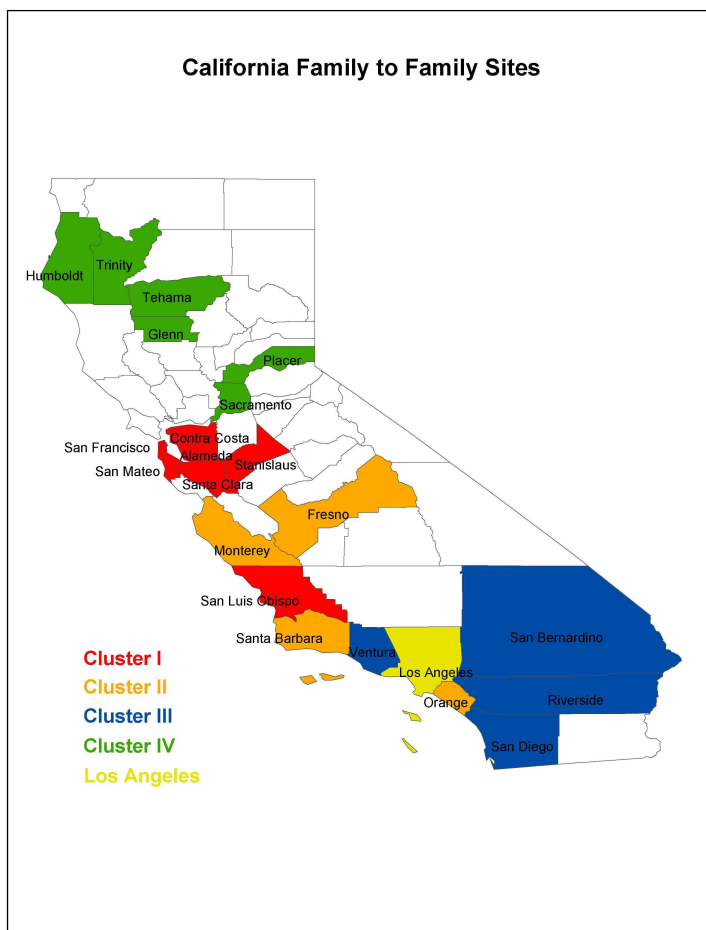




The California Family to Family Initiative

HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNTY ACTIVITIES (JANUARY 2006)



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INTRODUCTION: This report provides a highlight of the activities of the California Family to Family (F2F) counties as of January 2006. The F2F Initiative is a national child welfare and foster care reform initiative developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 1992 and is currently located in eighteen States.

The four core strategies of F2F are:

1. Recruitment, Development, and Support of Resource Families (RDS)
2. Building Community Partnerships (BCP)
3. Team Decisionmaking (TDM)
4. Self Evaluation (SE)

The outcome goals of Family to Family:

- A reduction in the number of children served in institutional and congregate care.
- A shift of resources from congregate and institutional care to family foster care and family-centered services across all child and family-serving systems.
- A decrease in the lengths of stay in out-of-home placement.
- An increase in the number of planned reunifications.
- A decrease in the number of re-entries into care.
- A reduction in the number of placement moves experienced by children in care.
- An increase in the number of siblings placed together.
- A reduction in the total number of children served away from their own families.
- A reduction in any disparities associated with race/ethnicity, gender, or age in each of these outcomes.

The California F2F Initiative is a dynamic public-private partnership between national and state foundations and the State of California. Partners in the California Initiative include the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, and the California Department of Social Services.

F2F started in California in 1996 with a grant to Los Angeles County from the Annie E Casey Foundation. The statewide effort began in 2001 when the Stuart Foundation funded its first set of California counties and a

partnership was initiated with the California Department of Social Services. Currently, 24 out of 58 California counties participate in F2F. Approximately 85% of the 83,091 children in foster care in California live in a F2F county.¹

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CONVENINGS: F2F counties in California are divided into four cluster groups. The clusters are organized by their approximate F2F implementation status and, when possible, geographic proximity. Los Angeles has its own cluster grouping and is divided into three geographic areas.

Each of the four Cluster groups meet twice a year for a convening and are assigned an Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) TA for each of the four core strategies. In addition to the F2F consultants, guest presenters on topics such as AOD, education, and youth permanence, are invited to the F2F convenings. There is also an annual California Statewide conference where teams from all California F2F counties are invited to attend. The Resource Center for Family - Focused Practice at the University of California, Davis coordinates all convenings, except for Los Angeles, which are coordinated by the California State University of Los Angeles.

The F2F coordinators meet quarterly for peer-to-peer information sharing and support. A listserv with relevant child welfare articles and resources is provided for all California F2F sites. A Family to Family website, www.f2f.ca.gov is hosted by The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and maintained jointly by F2F and CDSS staff.

¹ Data Source: CWS/CMS 2005 Quarter 2 Extract.. Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Shaw, T., Dawson, W., Piccus, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Conley, A., Zaman, J., Smith, J., & Dunn, A. (2005). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved January 2006, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/> http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Pointintime/fostercare/childwel/data/CWf_P0_jul2005_s_p.html

Cluster I (7 counties)² and Cluster II (4 counties)³ has implemented many of the key elements of the F2F four core strategies. The newer cluster groups that began their F2F Initiative in 2003-2005 – Cluster III (5 counties)⁴, Cluster IV (7 counties)⁵, and Los Angeles - are in the early stages of implementation. Two new counties (Kern and Solano) were added in April 2005 and joined Cluster III and Cluster IV, respectively.

TDMs AND THE CA TDM DATABASE: In 2005, nine (9) additional California counties rolled out TDMs: Glenn, Humboldt, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Tehama, Trinity, and Ventura. San Diego County began their TDM rollout in January 2006. Kern and Solano Counties are scheduled to roll-out TDMs in Fall 2006.

The CA TDM database allows for the gathering/tracking of TDM meetings (participants and recommendations) and allows sites to export data to UC Berkeley who then links the exports to CWS/CMS data. This process will allow counties to see if recommendations made at TDM meetings occurred in real life. As of December 31, 2005, 19 of the 24 counties reported the following number of children who had TDMs in these four categories:

- 1161 meetings were held for imminent risk
- 2,513 meetings were held for emergency placement
- 3,050 meetings were held for placement moves
- 423 meetings were held for exits from placement⁶

² List of Cluster I counties (7 counties): Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus.

³ List of Cluster II counties (4 counties): Fresno, Monterey, Orange, and Santa Barbara.

⁴ List of Cluster III counties (5 counties): Kern, San Bernardino, San Diego, Riverside, and Ventura.

⁵ List of Cluster IV counties (7 counties): Glenn, Humboldt, Placer, Sacramento, Tehama, and Trinity.

⁶ These numbers are based on child event meetings.

CALIFORNIA CONNECTED BY 25 (FORMERLY YOUTH TRANSITION INITIATIVE): The California Connected by 25 Initiative is a youth transitions reform initiative of the California Family-to-Family Initiative. There are five participating counties: San Francisco, Santa Clara, Stanislaus, Fresno, and Alameda. There are five foundations participating in the initiative: Annie E. Casey, Stuart, Walter S. Johnson, William and Flora Hewlett, and The Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation. The Initiative is part of a national initiative of the Youth Transition Funders Group. In addition to the California sites, the national initiative includes Tampa and Indianapolis.

The purpose of the initiative is to provide a learning environment where agencies can apply new and improved services in the key areas of importance to transitioning youth: education, housing, employment/training, financial literacy and competency, personal/social asset development, and permanence. Each site will be given some grant assistance along with technical assistance on improving outcomes for transitioning foster youth.

In California, the framework for the initiative uses the Family-to-Family model of “strategy” development. A strategy incorporates guiding principles, values, key elements, tools, and technical assistance. Counties are helping to develop a strategy for the California Family to Family Initiative, which could be utilized by other California Family to Family counties to strengthen their system approach to serving transitioning foster youth.

CALIFORNIA PERMANENCY FOR PROJECT: The California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) is dedicated to assuring that no youth leaves the child welfare system without a permanent, lifelong connections to a caring adult. The Initiative is funded by the Stuart Foundation and currently works with 13 F2F counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles (Metro North), Monterey, Orange, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, and Stanislaus.

SUMMARY OF F2F COUNTIES ACTIVITIES 2005-06

FAMILY to FAMILY COUNTIES (24)	C l u s t e r	Pilot Counties for System Improvement Activities (Differential Response, Standardized Assessment, Permanency)	CA Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Differential Response	System of Care (SOC) County	California Permanency for Youth	Other youth engagement (i.e. CYC or YTAT)	CA Connected by 25	CALWORKS CWS Partnership (Linkages)
Alameda	1		X		X	CYC/YTAT	X	X
Contra Costa	1	X	X	X	X	CYC/YTAT		X
Fresno	2		X		X	CYC	X	X
Glenn	4	X	X	X		CYC/YTAT		
Humboldt	4	X	X		X	CYC/YTAT		X
Kern	3		X		X	CYC		X
Los Angeles	L A	X	X	X	Metro North	CYC/YTAT		Metro North and North Hollywood
Monterey	2		X	X	X			
Orange	2			X	X	CYC		X
Placer	4	X	X	X		CYC/YTAT		
Riverside	3					CYC		
Sacramento	4	X	X		X	CYC/YTAT		X
San Bernardino	3					CYC/YTAT		X
San Diego	3		X			CYC/YTAT		
San Francisco	1		X	X	X	CYC	X	X
San Luis Obispo	1	X	X		X	CYC		X
Santa Clara	1		X			CYC/YTAT	X	
San Mateo	1	X	X		X	CYC/YTAT		
Solano	4		X					X
Santa Barbara	2		X			YTAT		X
Stanislaus	1	X	X		X	CYC	X	X
Tehama	4	X	X			CYC/YTAT		X
Trinity	4	X	X					X
Ventura	3					YTAT		X

SUMMARY OF F2F COUNTIES ACTIVITIES 2005-06

FAMILY to FAMILY COUNTIES (24)	C l u s t e r	Birth Parent Participation: Mentor and Leadership Programs	Model Standard Project TA	Education TA or Education Liaison	Reducing Racial Disparities Strategic Plans	Ice- breakers: in place or planning phase	Risk Asses. Tool Structured Decision Making (SDM) or California Assessment Tool (CAT)	PRIDE Training	Foster Parent Tracking Tool: in place or planning
Alameda	1	X	X			Planning	X	X	Planning
Contra Costa	1	X			X	Planning		X	
Fresno	2	X	x	Educational Liaison	X	X	CAT	X	X
Glenn	4	X		Educational Liaison		Planning			
Humboldt	4					X	X		
Kern	3	X				Planning	X		
Los Angeles		Planning		X		1 office	X		X
Monterey	2	X		X		Planning	X		
Orange	2	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Placer	4	X				X	X	X	
Riverside	3	X		X	X	Planning	X	X	X
Sacramento	4	X					X	X	
San Bernardino	3	Planning		Planning	X	Planning	CAT	X	X
San Diego	3					Planning		X	
San Francisco	1	X		X	X	Planning	Planning	X	
San Luis Obispo	1		X	X		X	X	X	
Santa Clara	1	X		X		Planning	X	X	
San Mateo	1			X		X	CAT		X
Solano	4					X	X	X	X
Santa Barbara	2							X	
Stanislaus	1			X				X	
Tehama	4	X		X		X	X	X	
Trinity	4			Education Liaison		Planning	X		
Ventura	3	X				Planning	X	X	Planning

DEFINITIONS:

1. Cohort 1 Redesign counties: Pilot Counties for System Improvement Activities (Differential Response, Standardized Assessment, Permanency).

<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/res/pdf/FAQs.pdf>

The California's Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act (AB636) was implemented in January 2004. The Act requires the State and Counties establish improvement goals, public reporting of outcomes, and county-specific improvement plans.

2. CA Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Differential Response

http://www.cwda.org/downloads/DifferentialResponsePolicyBrief_FINAL.pdf

Differential Response is a strategy to evaluate and respond to the many different circumstances of children entering care and involving community collaboration in providing services. Counties receive technical assistance and training to implement the different components of Differential Response.

3. California System of Care (CSOC) http://www.dmh.ca.gov/CFPP/csoc_initiative.asp and http://www.dmh.ca.gov/CFPP/part_counties.asp

The Children's System of Care (CSOC) Initiative provides supplemental allocations of federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) block grant dollars to support services to seriously emotionally disturbed children in selected California counties.

5. California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) <http://www.cypyp.org/updates.htm>.

CPYP is a project of the Public Health Institute (started in January 2003). The goal is to achieve permanency for older children and youth in California so that no youth leaves foster care without a lifelong connection to a caring adult.

6. Youth Transition Age Team (YTAT) <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat.html>

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative brings together the resources of the workforce, education, and child welfare systems to better prepare foster youth to achieve economic, educational, and employment success as they transition into the adult world.

6. California Youth Connection (CYC) <http://www.calyouthconn.org/site/cyc/>

California Youth Connection is guided, focused and driven by current and former foster youth with the assistance of other committed community members. CYC promotes the participation of foster youth in policy development and legislative change to improve the foster care system, social work practice and child welfare policy. CYC Chapters in counties throughout the state identify local issues and use grassroots and community organizing techniques to create change.

7. CA Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) <http://www.f2f.ca.gov/California25.htm>

The California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) is part of the California Family to Family strategy for improving child welfare. The Initiative is being tested by five counties that are developing and implementing multiple strategies to help emancipating foster youth successfully transition to adulthood.

8. Calworks and CWS Partnership (LINKAGES)

http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/linkages_001.htm

<http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/pdfs/LinkagesPlanningGuide.pdf>

The CalWORKs/Child Welfare Partnership Project, also known as Linkages was launched in November 2000 in California to develop a coordinated services approach to better serve families and improve outcomes.

Child Welfare Services can serve as an anti-poverty program; and CalWORKs (known formally as the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) can assist in preventing child abuse and neglect.

9. Model Standards Project (MSP). Developed by Legal Services for Children, the goal of this project is to develop, disseminate and implement model professional standards for the care of LGBT youth in out of home care.

10. Icebreakers. The term Ice Breaker refers to an initial meeting between the birth parents, foster parents and caseworker. This meeting provides an opportunity for parents and foster parents to talk about the needs of the child.

11. Structured Decision Making (SDM) http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/Structured_352.htm
The purpose of the SDM project is to provide child welfare workers with a set of research-based risk assessment tools in order to help them in making critical case assessments and decisions.

12. The Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE)
PRIDE is a curriculum developed by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). It is a 14-step process designed to strengthen the quality of family foster care and adoption services by providing a standardized, consistent, structured framework for the competency-based recruitment, preparation, and selection of foster and adoptive parents, and for foster parent in-service training and ongoing professional development.

13. Foster Parent Tracking Tool

Many counties are developing a foster parent tracking tool to better understand and gather data regarding the licensing process from the first telephone call through to placement.

CLUSTER I (7 Counties – Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus)

ALAMEDA COUNTY

Alameda Co Social Services Agency (f2f funding began in 2003)

Contact: Lori Jones, Division Director/F2F coordinator, jonesle@acgov.org

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS)

The RDS workgroup meets twice month. One of several recruitment strategies supported by the workgroup is the “Heart Gallery”; a project featuring photographs of children and youth that will debut in April 2006. The traveling exhibit will be featured throughout the Bay Area with the purpose of promoting adoption and permanency for kids in care. Another recruitment effort is the ongoing monthly Brown Bag series for staff, community partners and resource parents. The Brown Bags feature youth’s digital stories offering real life scenarios that help to inform staff, community partners and potential resource parents. The RDS workgroup is responsible for organizing bi-annual resource parent socials. The socials serve as an opportunity for resource parents to sit down one on one with staff and mingle in an informal setting. The socials often incorporate a training component as well as refreshments and remarks by the Department Director. The RDS workgroup has assisted the Agency in planning and organizing two (2) faith initiative convenings. The convenings have provided members of the faith community the opportunity to learn about the challenges of child welfare and how these challenges impact the community. Faith leaders have been asked to partner with the Agency to address the challenge of recruiting resource parents, supporting kin families and providing other support, such as space for resource parent trainings, birth parent orientation classes and TDM meetings.

In June 2005, the Agency collaborated with community partners to host a Youth Town Hall meeting. This event featured a screening of the documentary “Aging Out” that was followed by a youth panel, addressing various aspects of the documentary and general issues concerning youth in care. The Youth Town meeting offered workshops, a keynote speech by author Regina Louise as well as resources and referrals. More than 15 youth helped in planning and organizing the event. More than 150 participants attended the Town Hall.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP) The Agency’s Community Partnership workgroup has evolved into three (3) sub-committees: Youth Engagement, Parent Engagement and Community Engagement. The Youth Engagement Workgroup’s focus is on bringing youth to the table in the Department’s reform efforts. The workgroup is planning to hire a youth advisor (former foster youth) to work one on one with youth who will serve on a youth advisory council. The workgroup is partnering with Alameda

County Public Health, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), California Youth Connections (CYC) and Foster Youth Alliance in the development of a youth advisory council. The Parent Engagement Workgroup meets monthly. This group has been responsible for planning parent

orientations that are held twice monthly. Parent orientation sessions are available to parents who are new to the child welfare system. Staff as well as birth parents that have successfully reunified with their children, led the orientations. To date, 82 parents have graduated from the Parent Engagement Orientation series. Ten (10) parents have been trained and serve as parent leaders. Plans are underway for an Agency sponsored dinner to honor the parent leaders and to recognize February as National Parent Leadership Month. The Agency’s differential response program, Another Road to Safety (ARS), has been the catalyst for the Community Engagement Workgroup. The Agency has developed a

partnership with community-based organizations in the three (3) target areas that experience the highest rates of referrals. By diverting low risk referrals to the ARS community partners, the Agency is able to provide preventative services through contracted community service providers.

TEAM DECISION-MAKING (TDM) The Department implemented TDMs in September 2004. TDMs are conducted on all new intake cases and change of placements. The majority of TDMs are attended by at least 1 parent as well as a service provider. The vast majority (over 80%) of TDMs are attended by a family member or other interested individual. Currently, all TDMs are held in county facilities. The Department continues its work in building relationships with our community partners and plans to eventually hold TDMs at community sites. As a result of the Agency's Linkages initiative, the Department partners with Workforce Benefits and Administration (WBA) by staffing TDMs with a CalWORKS employment counselor. CalWORKS staff provides resources and referrals to families that are CalWORKS eligible.

DATA INTEGRITY/SELF EVALUATION (DISE): The Agency's DISE workgroup meets twice a month and is comprised of staff and most recently a community partner has joined the workgroup. The workgroup is co-chaired by staff involved in the Department's Quality Assurance (QA) unit. As a result, the workgroup not only addresses issues related to the evaluation of data, but also the integrity of the data. Along with collecting data for the SIP, the workgroup's goals include understanding and explaining the Child Welfare Review process, identifying data and information sources and understanding their interactions. The work group also supports management and staff

by relating data to the AB636 outcomes of safety, permanency and well being in order to evaluate the impact of program interventions on those outcomes. The workgroup has also developed a Court Report Review Checklist. The checklist is a document that will be used throughout the Department to ensure the uniformity in the submission and review of court reports.

YOUTH PERMANENCE Alameda County is an active member of the California Permanency for Youth Project and participates in the bi-monthly CPYP meetings. Family Builders by Adoption and Alameda County received a \$1.5 million grant in October 2005 to find permanent homes for more than 200 youth between the ages of 12 - 17 over the next 5 years. As a part of this grant award, three (3) Family Builders by Adoption permanency social workers were assigned to work with county staff. The Brown bag lunch series are held on a monthly and create an opportunity for staff, caregivers and community-based agencies to learn about permanency issues. The Guide to Permanency Options, which was developed in 2004, has been translated in Spanish. Alameda is the lead agency for The Bay Area Heart Gallery, a regional public/private partnership project that includes many CPYP counties. The Bay Area Heart Gallery, will travel across eight (8) counties this year, and will show gallery quality photographs of children, youth and families who are in foster care as a recruitment tool. The Gallery will hold its grand opening on April 24, 2006 at Oakland City Hall. The Gallery highlights the needs older youth in foster care and will feature youth of all ages in need of adoption and permanent lifelong connections.

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Contra Costa Co Emp and Hum Svcs (F2F funding began in 2001)

Contact: Steve Peavler, Division Manager, peavls@cws.state.ca.us

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

Children and Family Services (CFS) has three Community Engagement Specialists who commit 10% of their time to recruitment activities, especially in the targeted F2F areas and attend monthly RDS meetings. The liaisons provide follow-up assistance to potential applicants. CFS utilizes data on the numbers of removals and resource homes in the targeted F2F areas. The statistics are reviewed on a quarterly basis to measure the progress of this targeted recruitment. CFS holds monthly orientations across the county and has added additional orientations in the F2F targeted areas. An experienced foster parent has been contracted to attend orientations and provide follow-up calls to

prospective resource families. A follow-up thank you for your interest card is sent within two weeks of orientation. The concept of Icebreakers was implemented countywide in January 2006. CFS continues to utilize PRIDE training.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP)

There are local redesign partnership meetings in each region of the County. These meetings, initially attended by just a handful of community members now enjoy substantial representation by a diverse group of community partners. Community partners demonstrate considerable buy-in and ownership of the process, with meetings being "hosted" by the various partners. Fifteen mini-grants to address identified local service needs have evolved from these partnerships and a new community needs survey was conducted recently in collaboration with local community and faith-based organizations. Quarterly data on Differential Response and TDM are shared at these redesign meetings. There has been a steady increase in the number of community partners taking leadership roles and

participating in the TDM process. A substantial portion of Contra Costa's State Redesign funds have been utilized to implement Differential Response, creating 14 community case management positions in the F2F phase-in areas with a capacity to serve up to 210 families. As part of the Differential Response process, Community Engagement Specialists work to link families to Differential Response services. This strategy has enhanced the overall work in the community and has brought numerous new partners, including Faith-based organizations, to

the table. CFS collaborates with the County Office of Education through the CFS educational liaisons.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING

(TDM): TDM were implemented in January 2003. Approximately 95%

have been held at the front end. Due to System of Care federal funding, TDM's have been expanded to include Placement Change and Exit TDMs. Placement Change TDMs began in the Centralized Residential Placement Unit, which works with children and youth with the highest level of placement needs. Beginning in February 2006, Placement Change and Exit TDMs will be expanded to the Western part of the County. Currently there are 3 full time TDM facilitators and 12 back-up facilitators. To address racial disproportionality, TDMs were expanded in 2005 to all African American children countywide under the age of 1 year. This criterion will be broadened to include African American children under the age of 5 beginning February 2006. Other efforts to address disproportionality over the past year include expansion of the TDM to zip codes with the highest proportion of African American families.

There are contracts with the local Domestic Violence agency to ensure staff attendance to TDMs when appropriate. There is a full time Early Intervention and Outreach Specialist to link TDM families with substance abuse treatment services.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): Two new staff were added to the Evaluation Team this past year and data is now more accessible and has become well integrated into the management process. During the Bi-Monthly County Leadership team meetings, researchers present information and evaluation to the group for discussion in a variety of areas. Examples of information recently reviewed at County Leadership Team are a review of 2005 Referral and Case demographics including age and ethnicity, placement home location compared to home of removal location, sibling groups, and Placement Home type. Information reported supports decisions for expanding services such as TDM and defining needs for Foster Home recruitment. The Data Team has been successful in linking data in the TDM database with client information in CWS/CMS and uses this link to evaluate the success of the TDM activity.

PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER YOUTH: With the System of Care Grant in 2003 and Redesign in 2004, several efforts developed to specifically address youth issues in Contra Costa County. Since March 2004, the Permanency and Youth Transition Workgroup met monthly. Most recently a three phase Young Adult Preparation process (YAPP) has been developed which encompasses Early Preparation of young teens,

Formal Transition planning called “e-conferences”, and Enhanced Discharged planning or Exit TDM’s. The vision of the Young Adult Preparation Process is to develop comprehensive permanency and transition plans for all youth in Contra Costa County. These plans will be youth driven plans that will aim to increase post-dependency stability, create supportive networks of committed adults and address the youth’s desired educational and career goals. Contra Costa County recently became a California Permanency for Youth Project County and begins work in January 2006. Numerous youth have been trained and hired to participate in a Speakers Bureau, which speaks throughout the county regarding foster care related issues. Youth also participate on various committees and workgroups. In the summer, a Youth Advisory Group comprised of staff, current foster youth, and emancipated youth, was convened specifically to advise the County regarding team meetings such as TDM and e-conferences. Also this past year, an emancipation binder, which is a handsome looking planner, was spearheaded and developed by a former youth. This emancipation binder contains the youth’s important documents, resource directory, gift cards, and contact lists. It has been written into policy and will be available for all Contra Costa County youth upon emancipation.

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS)

A first placement support protocol was developed where designated support staff provide “First Response” services to assist Resource Families when they receive their first placement. Staff continues to work with the family throughout the first year and families are connected with a foster parent mentor. The numbers of foster parents participating in the RTS team has increased, a foster parent is the co-chair and the team includes two Latino foster parents. Since July 2005, ten new homes have been licensed, with ten more potential homes and four Spanish-speaking homes pending. Brown Bag informational meetings for foster parents are scheduled every 2 months and are well attended.

The staff provides specific meetings and consultation for Latino foster parents. Four Latino foster parents recently attended the Pride training to assist in pre-service and mentoring. There was an RTS Team retreat in Fall 2005. The team updated the Action tracking plan and the RTS Chairs introduced the Icebreaker concept. To improve communication between Licensing and Placement Units, there is now cross representation on meetings: RTS and Placement Units meet regularly regarding resource families and Placement staff regularly participates in RTS. The vacancy list is now updated by Licensing, in coordination with Placement Units and Staff regularly contacts all foster parents to see if they are accepting placement and offer additional support such as mentoring or respite. The MAC (Medical Advisory Committee) workgroup is a partner in addressing issues regarding Medically At-Risk Children and partners with public health nurses to outreach and recruit for medically

trained foster parents. There is a continued effort to recruit homes for teens, with participation in two radio interviews, community event, and fair. This year Foster Parent Appreciation events included a holiday party and dinner dance.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP)

There is a new CP Chairperson who is also the agency co-lead in the Parent Advisory Council. Peer parents have been hired to work on

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is a group of dedicated birth and foster parents and community partners who meet monthly to provide ongoing feedback about the experience of birth families involved with the child welfare system. Homeless Prenatal Program, a community-based nonprofit agency, has recently been awarded a contract to provide support to PAC and develop two key areas of parent partnership – peer parent mentors and a weekly support groups for families with open cases.

Differential Response and to establish parent support groups. With assistance from Parents Anonymous, a strategic plan was developed to implement a Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC workgroup included representation from Family Resource Centers, foster families, ombudsman, birth parents and agency staff. The

Family Preservation Coordinator with the support of the Community Partner Chair has conducted several F2F orientations and training sessions. A resource fair, coordinated by the Community Partner committee, was held in the target areas. Additional activities have included training with the Mexican Consulate, a Cinco de Mayo Celebration, and a screening of the document “Aging Out,” followed by a youth panel. Staff is housed at two of the community agencies and is also involved in the TDM workgroups for project planning and development.

The Chicano/Latino Family Resources System, a multi-agency collaborative, is an important community partner. They have developed a comprehensive list of stakeholders serving Latino families in San Francisco, held community meetings with representatives from at least 25 agencies, met with more than ten individual providers and prepared an expanded base of nine

allied agencies to participate in partnership with HSA in the implementation of Team Decision Making and Differential Response. As a result, the network of providers serving Latino families has participated in two community conversations to educate participants regarding welfare reform initiatives and to engage them in identifying issues and strategies to insure culturally accessible implementation of TDMs and Differential Response. The Chicano/Latino Family Resources System developed a Phase II strategy focused on building a community of support for families, with a plan to accomplish this is through on-going community education for cultural transformation. This includes trainings in early crisis intervention and the development of specific tools and protocols for accessing various services, including child welfare.

Disproportionality has been addressed through the following: awarded Casey Breakthrough Series Collaborative, PDSAs on front end building on differential response workgroup, have begun concept mapping survey and building on the Community Partnership/TDM pilot. The Board of Supervisors held a meeting in early November to move forward with implementing recommendations from the 2004 Disproportionality Report. The Redesign Core Team consists of a number of inter- and intra-private and public partners who continue to meet regularly. Data is shared with the Core Team members and have notified them that membership on various F2F and SIP-related committees are open and encouraged.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): Phase II of TDMs continued expansion in 2005 and in January 2006 TDMs for removals were mandated throughout the entire division. All cases with recent detention reports are identified to ensure that they had TDMs held as required. SF is planning for Permanency TDMs that is in the System Improvement Plan (SIP) per AB636 as a way to reduce reentries of children returning to foster care. The TDM workgroup is engaged in the implementation of Structured Decision Making, a risk assessment tool. ER staff will begin to pilot this tool and use it in TDMs to help inform and

articulate removal decisions. A significant step for San Francisco was piloting the participation of minor's counsel in TDMs. This was initially held for a 90-day pilot period. Given the success of the pilot, minor's counsel has continued to participate in TDMs.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): The self-evaluation committee will continue to conduct a survey of the caregivers of recently emancipated youth. Self-Evaluation staff review data reports and will start posting reports on the internet with link. Self-Evaluation staff also identified pertinent visit compliance data that was released to the Division in a newsletter issued in early October. Safe Measures has been made available to all staff; refresher courses are open for interested supervisors and staff. Self-evaluation has established baseline data for families who reunify and youth who transition from 300 (Juvenile Dependent) status to 602 (Juvenile Probation) status. The reunification data was especially compelling as it showed a significant drop in reunifications in 2004, which begs for further analysis. The TDM facilitators themselves are now entering TDM data into the database. This has made for more timely and consistent data entry.

CALIFORNIA CONNECTED BY 25: Gains have been made this year within the department with divisions such as Housing and Homeless and Adult Services. A strategic plan has been developed that includes the development of 15 new housing units for youth, hiring youth employment specialists, and establishing two informational kiosks at One Stop Centers.

YOUTH PERMANENCE WORK GROUP

Accomplishments in 2005 include the co-chair joining the Honoring Emancipate Youth (HEY) network meetings, completing a Youth Focus Group Questionnaire, identification of partner-agencies working with youth in San Francisco, viewing of digital stories at four different sites, viewing of the movie Aging Out, completing the pamphlet, "Achieving Permanency for San Francisco Youth".

**SAN LUIS OBISPO
COUNTY****San Luis Obispo Co Dept of Social Svcs (f2f funding began in 2001)****Contact: Mari Solis, F2F Coordinator, msolis@co.slo.ca.us**

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS): The RTR committee has broken into three sub-groups to better focus on areas of improved practice. Recruitment: Through collaboration between DSS, local FFAs, local FPA, CYC, schools, and the local community college; Training (Development): Streamlining available resources to enhance important training for resource families utilizing knowledge and skills from those including birth parents and foster youth; and Retention (Support): Analyzing internal and external processes and protocols which will enhance effective practices for potential and existing resource families. Notable outcomes include relative and non-relative extended family member placements are significantly above the State average, while group home placements are significantly below the State average. Other RTR activities: FFA and Foster Parent Association partners provide a wealth of recruitment, training and retention ideas and strategies. Targeted recruitment efforts are based on monthly data self-assessments. Digital stories, coffee sleeve promos, and a major public awareness campaign are in progress, including the Heart Gallery project. The local California Youth Connection chapter is developing a curriculum for training to staff, foster parents and community partners. The PRIDE curriculum and training module is being re-examined to serve as a recruitment as well as retention tool. Icebreakers (known as “about Your Child” meetings) have been implemented on a small scale. A primary objective in the next year is to focus on increased resource parent, birth parent, and youth involvement; and increased collaborative recruitment strategies in conjunction with the local FFA’s. The RTR Committee has been working with Children’s Services Network to host a countywide conference on Foster Care Recruitment and Retention including heightened awareness of various foster care statistics in San Luis Obispo County.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP): Community partnerships through existing

community collaborative continue to be built and sustained. Examples of community partnerships in action are accomplishments through the various Redesign/ F2F committee work focused on the AB636/SIP goals and objectives; and one-on-one partnerships through school-linked social worker staff. Local Youth Task Forces, service clubs, faith-based organizations, and school-affiliated groups are targeted. The Community Outreach Liaison are focused on common vision, values and outcomes while also emphasizing the need for foster family homes. Countywide and community specific data is shared and discussed in order to focus on specific areas of interest from community partners. Through collaboration with the Children’s Services Network Integrated Services Committee, the AB636/Redesign/F2F outcomes are reinforced in visioning for the future e.g., Family Resource Centers. Skills building and training for staff that is focused on family engagement and team facilitation continues to be a major department-wide effort to enhance improved community partner relationships. A community partner database was developed to track contacts and their specific areas of interest, which is shared monthly with the Management Team. The County is now working with a local public relations firm to increase and improve communication to staff and community through establishment of 1) an internal/DSS staff advisory panel, and 2) an external/community partner advisory panel.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): The department policy is to convene a TDM in all imminent risks of placement; emergency placements; placement moves and exits from placement. TDM facilitators meet weekly to learn and “debrief” from the past week’s TDMs. A core TDM committee continues to meet monthly to address items that affect policy and procedures. A central log has been developed which helps analyze the cases that are receiving TDMs, and is helping to identify specific areas of improvement. Community partners and supervisors have attended nearly all TDMs.

CalWORKs representation is also common at most TDMs. “TDM recidivism” is currently being assessed and training will be offered, which will define the various types of family team meetings that help to prevent placement decisions i.e., prevent TDMs from happening in the first place. Currently, three PDSAs are in progress to evaluate: 1) streamlining and improving practice to increase “up front” TDMs; 2) Utilizing solution-focused questions at TDMs, and 3) Addressing permanency (e.g., reunification, guardianship, adoption, familial support, and connections) at all TDMs.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): Data evaluation should be and is integrated in all F2F strategies. The IRT (Information Reporting Team) is an important and essential component of the success of the F2F strategies in SLO County, and continues to provide strong support. The report, “Snapshot of Children in Foster Care”, was developed to provide an overview of children in care and is used in recruitment efforts. SLO County is starting to use data to analyze outcomes to determine specific populations, social workers,

regions, age, ethnicity, poverty or other factors that may lead to solutions that improve outcomes.

PERMANENCY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT: The Permanency Committee meets twice monthly with a collaboration of several community youth organization partners; and has joined efforts with CPYP, Youth Training Project, and the New Ways to Work program. Two new full time positions were developed to work specifically with youth in permanency dependent status to achieve success in finding a significant family member or adult in their lives to achieve permanency. A database has been developed to track outcomes of randomly identified youths and their permanency outcomes. Youth involved with Kevin Campbell and Pat O’Brien were on-hand to create awareness and educate staff and community partners on foster youth and permanency. A successful “Got Permanency” campaign was implemented. SLO County is looking into combining Permanency Planning meetings after Permanency –specific TDMs.

**RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF
RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS)**

San Mateo County has developed a Legislative Proposal that if passed will increase Foster Family Home (FFH) rates. This proposal is in response to concerns that low FFH rates were discouraging recruitment and retention efforts in high cost-of-living San Mateo County. The TDM Supervisor is developing a training curriculum for Foster Parents by Agency-trained facilitators. A new Foster Parent Liaison, who reports directly to the Children and Family Services Director, has been hired. The Liaison helps bridge the link between Social Workers and foster parents, resolving policies and procedures issues, facilitating support groups, and addressing issues faced by foster parents. A respite care contract has been secured to support resource parents and foster children/youths (up to three days, without counting as a placement change). The Homefinding Unit developed policies and procedures to use these services. The TDM Facilitators provide resource parents with training on how to use respite care services.

**BUILDING COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS (BCP)**

Ninety-five percent of TDMs are held at community partners' premises. The remainder 5% of TDM meetings generally have special circumstances that require facilitation in a secure facility (e.g., TDMs for families with domestic violence history). A TDM brochure has been finalized and it is distributed to birth parents, social welfare staff, community partners, and other stakeholders. A TDM checklist pamphlet that delineates steps to prepare for a TDM meeting is distributed to all professional TDM

participants, including community partners. The pamphlet provides a checklist on what is needed prior, during, and post a TDM meeting from each professional participant. The TDM Supervisor continues to meet with community partners to discuss Team Decision Making and other team-based case planning functions in the County: Citizens Review Panel, Family Resource Centers, Superior Court Judges, School Districts, Mental Health professionals, and local State Group Home Agencies. .

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDM was first implemented in March 2003 and was made mandatory by the CFS Director in August 2004 for all child placements (i.e., children entering foster care, children changing homes within foster

Four Strengthening Partnership Workshops were convened to improve relations and communication between Social Workers and resource parents. Several positive outcomes have arisen from these Workshops: policies and procedures issues have been addressed with both parties at the same time, there has been increased regard for each other's roles and responsibilities, and increased buy-in for the Workshop. These Workshops were a great success with both Social Workers and foster parents and will therefore be continued on a quarterly basis.

care, and children exiting foster care due to family reunification or emancipation). San Mateo County contracted with SPHERE Institute to conduct an evaluation of all its team-based case planning meetings, including TDM. The draft report recommends TDM as a best practice strategy to improve child outcomes. Another report by the SPHERE Institute studying re-entry into the foster care system within 12 months of reunification also recommends TDM as a best practice strategy to attenuate re-entry rates. The TDM Supervisor has expanded

SMC's contract with SPIN USA to continue to develop the professional skills of its TDM Facilitators. The TDM Policies and Procedures Handbook have been approved by HSA and an abridged version is published on the Agency's intranet. TDM Facilitators continue to develop training courses on TDM for child welfare staff and other stakeholders. All new Social Workers are encouraged to attend TDM training sessions.

SELF EVALUATION (SE)

The SE team meets quarterly. An annual report provides a comprehensive look and analysis of the data, and is presented to the Child Welfare Policy Team, the Executive Team, and at other relevant venues. These data reports are published both on the intra- and inter-net to make accessible to all child welfare staff and outside community partners and stakeholders. SMC contracted with SPHERE Institute to evaluate: team-based case planning processes, factors that affect re-entry rates, and the community capacity and its readiness to implement a differential response system (an early intervention program aimed at attenuating re-referrals to Child Protective Services. The recommendations from the reports are being reviewed by Child Welfare Managers, Supervisors, and Agency Directors.

The TDM Unit has its own self-evaluation process. Two reports have been developed and are produced on a quarterly basis: “Monthly TDM Report”: reports the number of children who had a TDM in a given month and gives a summary on placement recommendations and “Placement Change and TDM Report”: reports the rate by which children who experienced placement change (i.e., enter foster care, change homes within foster care, reunify or emancipate) in a given month have a TDM meeting that informed their placement plan. Another report being developed will report the rate for which placement recommendations are realized. For example, what percent of kids whose TDM meeting recommended placement with a relative are actually placed a month later with a relative? A one-month period gives sufficient time to carry-out a relative assessment. The TDM Unit collects data on TDM participants’ satisfaction with the TDM process. This data is being analyzed and results will be reported in the *TDM Press Release* and other venues.

YOUTH PERMANENCE WORK GROUP San Mateo County has formed a chapter with California Youth Connections (CYC). The TDM Supervisor is establishing a partnership with CYC to engage the participation of CYC members as advocates for youths at TDM meetings. The goal is for the

CYC member to co-facilitate TDM meetings when youths are involved to ensure that the youth feels supported during the TDM process.

To support and retain TDM Facilitators, the TDM Supervisor has contracted with a therapist to help facilitators with the emotional aspects of facilitating sensitive and confidential meetings, boundary issues and handling stress.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Santa Clara Co Dept Family and Children's Srv (f2f funding began in 2001)

Contact: James Anderson, F2F coordinator, James.Anderson@ssa.sccgov.org

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS)

The workgroup has helped shift recruitment efforts from internal and centralized to community-based and regional.

The Resource Family Support Team was developed to provide additional support for the county's licensed resource home providers. The team is comprised of former or current foster parents. Each resource home advocate is assigned to a specific family and participates in TDMs whenever a placement change occurs. Santa Clara also has a Foster/Adoptive Parent Resource Center. Relative finding is a key strategy in Santa Clara. Data has shown a higher proportion of children are placed with relatives.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

PARTNERSHIPS (BCP)

Six community action teams were developed. Four teams are defined by region. Two teams are defined by culture and ethnicity. Each

community action team (CAT) is co-chaired by a community member and department staff. The county has created a joint response with law enforcement to reduce the number of children coming into care, with a major emphasis on children of color. This joint response program has expanded beyond the San Jose Police jurisdiction to neighboring jurisdictions with full expansion complete in December 2006. Each respective CAT has representatives who are available to participate in TDMs on an as-needed basis.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM). TDMs began in July 2003. Meetings were initially requested for children who were in protective custody but had a strong risk of being diverted to the Juvenile Court System. It was then expanded

to all diversion cases and offered for those social workers that wanted to voluntarily refer families for a TDM. The next major rollout occurred in July 2004 for all placement changes and transitions.

SELF EVALUATION (SE) The SE Committee has evolved into the county's SIP data team and provides data to other SIP workgroups. The chair of the SIP data team participates in monthly meetings with top agency management.

**PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER
YOUTH** California Youth Connection (CYC) is an active participant on the Foster Parent Advisory

Board. Santa Clara County uses the PRIDE/F2F curriculum and both birth parents and former foster youth from CYC are included in the training. A Foster Youth Advisory Board was developed

to review the gaps in foster youth education, housing, and employment services and recommend ways to bridge these gaps with services. This board will also get involved in foster youth transition workgroups in order to advise the Department and help plan services in the community that can significantly change outcomes for foster youth.

CALIFORNIA CONNECTED BY 25 Santa Clara is one of five CA counties participating in CC25I in building a comprehensive continuum of services that support foster youth who are transitioning to adulthood, ages 14-24. Santa Clara will focus on a Career Pathways Employment and Training program and developing a continuum of supportive housing services for emancipating youth.

Santa Clara County has adopted a new Relative Care Support Program. This is a comprehensive menu of services for relative care providers, including crisis intervention wraparound services, development of a relative support team with behavior management specialists, and immediate care packages for all first time relative placements.

**RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF
RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS)**

The F2F Pride curriculum was implemented for all potential resource parents and pride sessions are offered throughout the year, at different times and days. Prospective families can start Pride at any point

throughout the series in order to reduce lengthy waiting periods.

Resource families receive support through a mentorship program, on-going education with Modesto Junior College, monthly resource parent newsletters, contact with the licensing and

recruitment staff, and regular events and activities for the resource families. Stanislaus County has a close working relationship with the Foster Parent Association. Social workers are introduced to new resource families through the monthly PowerPoint of new and existing families, a quarterly "Coffee Connection" which brings together families and social workers, as well as the opportunity to participate in F2F Pride sessions.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

(BCP) The Child and Family Services Division have been working to expand partnerships to include neighborhood-based partners in child welfare work. As a CWS System Improvement Pilot county, Stanislaus has been in the process of implementing Differential Response. In partnership with Children and Families Commission (First 5), the eight (8) Family Resource Centers (FRCs) were identified as the partners for implementation of Differential Response and support services in the community.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDMs began in February 2002. Since that time, TDM has been expanded to include all removal and placement decisions. Social workers are encouraged and have held TDMs for exit from placement.

SELF EVALUATION (SE) The SE team has been meeting since 2002 and currently meets twice a month. There is a data analyst / researcher, a quality assurance worker and an applications specialist assigned to the systems improvement unit in Child and Family Services. One particular achievement this past year was the use of geographic mapping to assign emergency response social workers to the community. This effort has resulted in a closer partnership with the community and enables social workers to become more familiar with the resources in their regions.

Each resource family participating in Pride is given a foster teddy bear with a whole history and background that they must care for during the 9-week training program. At the time of completion, families must return the teddy with a lifebook and information about his/her experiences to pass along to the new family. The foster teddy has been a great success.

PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER

YOUTH Stanislaus County has been an active part of the California Permanency for Youth Project for a number of years. For adolescent youth that do not have a permanent plan of adoption or guardianship, an extensive search is completed for persons in the youth's life, present or past, which may be potential "life-long connections." A connected for life meeting is held for all youth to develop plans for permanency and transition to independent adulthood. During this past year, the Emergency Connected for Life meeting has been implemented for all youth for whom a permanent plan for long-term foster care is being recommended. The meeting is facilitated and held prior to the court hearing in order to expand efforts to locate potential permanency options for him or her.

California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) An important element of Stanislaus' workplan is to develop the Transitional Housing Plus program, which will allow emancipated youth to reside with supportive adults in a family environment. Stanislaus' CC25I workplan also include the development of a bridge to college and career program, which coordinates the WIA youth development program services with the local

Child Welfare Service Programs and Modesto Junior College. The curriculum has been developed utilizing a learning community approach and the first session of the Summer Bridge Program is scheduled to begin in May 2006. Additional staff has been hired that will work closely with emancipated/emancipating youth, including an Educational Liaison and two ILP interviewers. The F2F vision is incorporated

into the CC25I proposal. Youth are benefit by participating in the Connected for Life Meetings, conducted for youth 15.5 – 16 years old and yearly thereafter. As a way of capturing outcome data for this project, Stanislaus has developed the Foster Youth Transition Connected for Life Database, which tracks important outcomes.

CLUSTER II (4 Counties – Fresno, Monterey, Orange, and Santa Barbara)

FRESNO COUNTY

Fresno County Children and Family Services (f2f funding began in 2003)

Contact: Andrea Sobrado, Program Manager, Sobraa@co.fresno.ca.us

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS)

There has been a net increase of 15% to the number of licensed county homes in Fresno County since the implementation of F2F. Monthly Coffee Connections were established as neighborhood-based support groups for all resource families in those communities. Orientation and pre-placement training for adoptive and foster parents were consolidated. Focus groups, comprised of both resource families and social work staff, produced a set of shared expectations. These expectations will drive policy and practice for social work staff and will hold resource families accountable for their care of foster youth beginning 2006.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP):

Three neighborhood collaborative were established within the Target communities. Current data is brought to each monthly collaborative meeting. The Neighborhood Collaborative Chairs are appointed as a permanent part of the F2F Steering Committee.

The Wednesday's Child program was launched. It is an education program that runs on major TV stations, featuring adoptable children. The first show generated almost 20 inquiries.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM) Fresno County rolled out TDMS in 2004. Currently twenty community representatives have been trained and hired from the Neighborhood Collaborative to participate in TDMs. The TDM facilitators have completed nearly a year of SPIN training, and have demonstrated improvement in their facilitation skills.

SELF EVALUATION (SE):

The math club has become the popular “clique” at DCFS. Thanks to Self Evaluation, critical data for all the collaborative and task force meetings were developed, including information from the newest work of group that addresses disproportionality issues.

CALIFORNIA CONNECTED BY 25

The Educational Liaison was hired and has begun to work with all 9th graders in the foster care system to ensure they are on the right path to graduate from high school. The implementation of both the California Permanency for Youth Project and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Passport is underway. Fresno County is establishing a permanency handbook that will be used to educate staff, youth, probation, community partners, and resource families on the importance of making sure youth have the emotional permanency of a life-long connection before and after they exit the system.

MONTEREY COUNTY

Monterey Co Dept of Social and Emplmt Srv (f2f funding began in 2003)

Contact: Anne Herendeen, Program Manager II/F2F coordinator,
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RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

A bilingual, bicultural social worker was recently hired to focus on recruitment efforts, working closely with the RDS committee. The recruitment committee is revising a system to insure follow-up with families at all levels of interest. The respite and support training curriculum has been revised and childcare is now provided at caregiver trainings. Trainer guides and materials in both English and Spanish have been developed. The community liaisons have the lead responsibility in recruiting, assessing and matching the respite and/or support providers with their families. The county and local community college has expanded efforts to provide a broader spectrum of training for caregivers. Pre-service training in English and Spanish and initial trainings for relative caregivers have included presentations by foster youth and birth parents.

Targeted recruitment efforts have increased this year, including a first-ever booth at the county fair, PSAs created with the local TV station, flyers distributed on pizza boxes and with a local auto repair shop, and increased recruitment in the LGBTQ community.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP):

Monterey County added a fifth coalition area this year, which encompasses 2 large zip codes. With the addition of this coalition, most of the county's largest city is now part of Family to Family. Each of the five coalitions is holding monthly meetings. One of the coalitions has established four subcommittees to focus on areas of identified interest: Disproportionality, Foster Care Recruitment, Parent Mentorship (focusing on teen parents), and the Pastor's Action Committee. Two of the coalitions have developed partnerships with the local Kiwanis Clubs. One of the coalition's Kiwanis partner co-hosted a holiday party for the dependent children in relative and foster care. The coalition areas are supported through contracts with lead agencies that have designated community liaisons. The Executive Directors and

supervisors of the lead agencies meet regularly with the department for strategic planning, policy guidance, and coordination. This group attended the 2006 F2F State Conference as a team. The liaisons meet twice a month for sharing of ideas and strategies, joint planning, training and support. The goal in 2006 is to include smaller communities and rural areas.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): Monterey County began conducting first entry TDM's in May 2004, first in one of the coalition area, and then rolling-out to three coalition areas in 2004, and adding a fourth coalition area in 2005. There has been an expansion of five new cities where first entries are subject to TDM. The

TDM subcommittee continues to meet monthly to deal with policy and procedure issues. The supervisory team has begun a process to evaluate all client-focused meetings and to revise policies and procedures to eliminate conflicting protocols. Most TDMs are held for emergency placements.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): The Self-Evaluation Team has been integrated with the SIP Data Team. Information is provided to each of the local coalition areas about the children entering care from their respective areas, the numbers of placement options and the number of their children who were able to remain in the home zip code area. As the technical support team has become more familiar with child welfare processes, they are able to design reports in ways that can use real time information for program improvements.

PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER YOUTH: A policy directive has been implemented that requires all dependency cases to be

thoroughly reviewed prior to sending to long-term foster care. The intent is to keep a focus on reunification despite the time limits of child welfare services and also maintain a goal of adoption or guardianship despite the reluctance of caregivers. New language has been developed to consistently address permanency in court reports. The Wraparound Program has been used to support the return home of children who have been drifting in long-term foster care for many years. To increase relative placements and connections, the policy has been to support transportation of youth around the country to visit relatives over the holidays and school breaks. Social workers have been flown out-of-state to meet relatives and assess placement possibilities. There have been increased specialized permanency training for supervisors, recognizing they are the key to best practice. The Family

Reunification Supervisor participated in the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) Training for Trainers. The Court Intake Supervisor was reassigned to the Permanent Placement Unit for six months to experience the far end of the child welfare continuum and the importance of permanency planning early in the Dependency process. Supervisors and staff received technical assistance and training from Catholic Community Services on conducting relative searches and approaching relatives for more information. The CPYP steering committee dedicated a day of clinical case consultation with consultant Kevin Campbell. The Independent Living Program Advisory Board has been reconfigured and expanded to incorporate the needs of youth to grow up in a safe home, supportive community with life-long connections and nurturing relationships.

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

A grant was recently secured to develop an effective campaign to recruit resource families. Extensive recruitment and fosterware parties are occurring in targeted communities where the highest numbers of children come into foster care. In January 2005, Orange County began full implementation of the F2F PRIDE, a series of nine-classes provided for prospective resource families. Major components of PRIDE include the participation of veteran foster parents as equal partners in the training process and targeted skill building to help foster parents better engage birth parents.

Reunified birth parents and former foster youth are involved in this training.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP):

Orange County's Redesign Planning Council, made up of SSA staff and community partners, evaluates the current Child Welfare system, notes strengths and concerns, establishes goals for a redesign and looks at resources to accomplish these goals. The Planning Council reviews and addresses the implementation of the System Improvement Plan (SIP) and progress on AB636 outcome measures. The Planning Council also assists in the planning of the Community Forums that occur 3-4 times annually. These forums highlight relevant topics regarding Child Welfare and the community with the goal of increasing awareness, encouraging action and building partnerships with community members. The most recent of these forums was held in October 2005 at the Santa Ana Police Department Community Center. The topic was Substance Abuse and the Child Welfare system. As a result of the forum, a Substance Abuse Strategic Planning Committee was formed to

continue to improve services in this area.

During this past year the BCP Strategy group developed and recommended a plan for regionalization of Children and Family Services casework. This plan is designed to assign social workers to specific communities to increase knowledge of community resources and promote collaboration within the designated community.

Community partnership development is a focus of several Children and Family Services programs. The Healthy Tomorrows program continues to be extremely successful with its social work

involvement in five schools and the Therapeutic Art Center in Santa Ana. This program has worked with the various principals to determine the needs of each school. The program provides parenting classes and recruitment of both adult and teen community volunteers.

Quarterly events called Celebrating Families bring staff and reunified parents together to celebrate each parent's successful completion of family reunification. Parents attending these events are also invited to partner with the agency in an advisory capacity and have now formed a group called Parent's Taking Action (PTA). A birth parent is currently the chairperson for this group. The PTA has recently developed their own bylaws and governance structure.

Educational partnerships in Orange County have been further developed through the Educational Outcomes Workgroup. This education group is meeting to explore ways to improve communication with the schools on behalf of foster children. Training is being developed for social workers and foster parents to improve their knowledge of educational laws affecting foster children.

Orange County is partnering with birth parents that have successfully reunified with their children and now want to help other parents currently involved in the Child Welfare System. A Parent Leadership Task Force was formed in 2005 to further develop parent leadership. This task force has been meeting regularly to plan Celebrating Families Events and develop Parent Orientation sessions for parents as they first become involved

with the agency

TEAM DECISION MAKING: Orange County implemented TDMs in March of 2004. TDMs are currently held on all initial placement decisions that occur during normal working hours and all placement changes. In an effort to keep children from entering foster care without prior social work intervention, Orange County has implemented a Second Shift of Emergency Response workers that will employ regular staff until 10:00 p.m. This expands Emergency Response Services and allows more children coming into care after 6 PM to have a TDM. In addition, a rapid police response has been developed improving social worker response to law enforcement that are investigating in the field. A special hotline for law enforcement agencies has been activated for this purpose.

SELF EVALUATION: The Self-Evaluation Team has been meeting monthly since 2003 to gather data to support and analyze trends. A technical subgroup has also been formed to work on some of the more detailed data issues. The Self Evaluation Team assists with interpretation of AB636 outcome data in areas that need in depth examination. This data is then used with staff to problem solve in a way that helps to educate staff and change practice. This strategy team has done work in the area of geo-mapping by gathering information for targeted high client geographical areas. The SET Team has also developed a series of easy to read Bulletins and Data Sheets to distribute to staff and community partners.

PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER YOUTH: Orange County's became involved in the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) in July 2005. Training and other activities are planned to assist staff and community partners embrace the youth permanency concept and sustain the newly formed relationships. A series of six daylong training presentations by an emancipated youth group called Youth Offering Unique Tangible Help (Y.O.U.T.H.) is scheduled during the month of March 2006 for 258 staff and community partners. Beginning in April, there will be a kick-off presentation to a series of monthly Technical Assistance sessions offered one day per month for six months. There will be an e-mail distribution of a series of 6 or more e-mails that will be sent to all staff, sharing the philosophy of family finding and engagement, permanency, and CPYP successes. Emancipated youth are currently involved with the agency in an advisory capacity through their participation on the Children's System of Care Committee. They also have been speakers at new employee orientations, presentations to various program meetings and community forums.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Santa Barbara County Social Services Dept (F2F funding began in 2001)

Contact: Deborah E. Hartman, division chief, d.hartman@sbcsocialserv.org

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS)

A supervisor and full-time bilingual recruiter/liaison was recently hired specifically for relative approval and foster parent licensing, recruitment, support, and training. Recruitment efforts have shifted to focus on community-based needs. The County is focusing on the recruitment of Spanish-speaking resource families and will be holding Spanish PRIDE/F2F training in March. TV ads have been aired on local Spanish language TV. Ongoing general recruitment efforts are continuing and include information booths at local community events, newsletters, TV and newspaper ads, and “fosterware” information parties. Faith based organizations have been active in assisting in recruitment and support by offering their facilities for speaking engagements and for foster parent support groups. There has been a recent expansion in the recruitment and approval of relative/non-related extended family member homes. Relative finding will be a key strategy to increase permanency for children. Foster parent support groups have been a successful strategy for providing training and support for resource families and are regularly attended by County staff.

Santa Barbara County has just introduced its “home connection finders” model that focuses on finding both placements and connections for children who are entering and emancipating from care. A community-based organization has been contracted to provide intensive in-home services for children who are placed in both relative/non-relative extended family member homes and foster homes.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP)

Presentation on F2F is made in the communities on a regular basis. Specific outreach activities include: Letters were sent to all Santa Maria area schools. There was a distribution of the “Code of Conduct” and quarterly foster parent newsletter with Community Partners at the monthly meetings. Regular meetings with nonprofit agencies, First Five Commission, drug and alcohol

contractors, local Hospitals, law enforcement, Domestic Violence Programs, Family Resource centers, counseling agencies, Foster Youth Services, public health organizations, and faith-based organizations have been held.

TEAM DECISION MAKING: TDMs are continuing, being used at more and different points throughout the case. TDMs are well accepted now by the Courts and it is sometimes the suggestion of the Judge to have a TDM. There is positive feedback on TDMs from the attorneys. Other community agencies are invited and attend the TDMS.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT: Santa Barbara County’s Independent Living Program (ILP) has undergone exciting changes in 2005/2006. The County has contracted with a Community Based Organization to provide Independent Living Services

including case managers for every ILP eligible child. ILP classes are now offered County Wide and beginning in 2006 Emancipation Conferences will now be held for all graduating seniors. Santa Barbara County has been awarded a grant from the state to assist in locating relatives and NREFMs. A Project Manager has been hired whose primary responsibility is to seek and secure appropriate and stable placement alternatives for foster youth in Santa Barbara County. This includes an assessment component

CLUSTER III (5 Counties – Kern, San Bernardino, San Diego, Riverside, and Ventura)

KERN COUNTY

Kern County Dept of Human Services (f2f began in 2005)

Contact: Brian Parnell, Program Director, parnelb@co.kern.ca.us

Blanca Garcia, F2F Coordinator, garciab@co.kern.ca.us

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

Since the introduction of F2F, Kern has implemented a number of recruitment changes. The Foster Parent Orientation has been revised to include birth

parents. Two Foster Parent Coordinators, contract employees who are veteran foster parents, have been hired. They track foster parents applications from the date of submission until departure and ask how people learned about foster parenting, and why they choose to give up their licenses. A database to track all contacts is being developed. Managers now attend every Foster Parent Association meeting. The department also funds and distributes the Foster Parent Association monthly

newsletter. FFAs were invited to participate in planning and training of staff. Promotion efforts have been conducted through TV, radio, and billboards. A “Taking Care of Business Day” was held, primarily targeting African American families for recruitment as resource families. Taking Care of Business Day allowed applicants to attend orientation, complete a licensing application, obtain CPR and First Aid certification, fingerprinting, and TB testing, all at one location on a single day. Recruitment efforts are focused in the target area of Ridgecrest. Foster parent orientation had been held almost exclusively in Bakersfield, almost two hours drive from Ridgecrest. In February, orientation meetings will be held in Ridgecrest.

Kern County’s first Icebreaker meeting was held in December 2005 and was facilitated by the

family’s court intake social worker. The meeting was successful in relieving some of the birth parents’ fears and resulted in “rolling over” the emergency placement into a regular placement, thus preventing a placement change for the baby.

F2F Recruitment Success Stories

- The foster parent coordinator contacted 24 former foster parents who had resigned. Nineteen of the 24, because of this contact, decided to remain foster parents.
- Prior to F2F, Kern relied on voicemail to answer initial inquiries about fostering. There is now a dedicated line, staff during all business hours by foster parent coordinators and the foster parent ombudsman.
- Prior to F2F, Kern had approximately five families identified as respite care providers. There are now 3x that number, partly due to exit contact by the Foster Parent Coordinators.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP):

The BCP committee has been meeting since 2005, with the targeted areas Ridgecrest and 93307. The first meeting included faith-based organizations, the media, and other stakeholders. A joint presentation by BCP and RDS at a church in the 93307 neighborhood was conducted to engage potential foster parents and other partners. Similar outreach is planned for Ridgecrest.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM):

The TDM Committee has been meeting regularly since October 2005. The committee visited Fresno County and used the information obtained to shape the initial protocol. Preliminary TDM information has been distributed via large poster boards in staff areas, informational flyers, and presentations to social service staff.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): The SET committee is working with staff from UC Berkeley regarding data collection issues. Data has been provided to the three F2F committees at least monthly upon their request. GIS data specific to child abuse and foster care has been geo-coded and mapped, and there will soon be visuals available of foster homes in neighborhoods, foster homes within school boundaries, and child abuse rates in neighborhoods.

San Bernardino Co Dept of Children's Services (f2f funding began in 2004)

Contact: Sally Richter, F2F Coordinator, srichter@hss.sbcounty.gov

Sandra Williams, F2F Regional Liaison, swilliams@hss.sbcounty.gov

**RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF
RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):**

The RDS workgroup

has several resource families who offer insights and support/mentor to new resource families and resource parents actively participate on all of the F2F strategy workgroups.

A laminated card about the process of becoming a resource family has been distributed to all staff. A commitment to return all resource family phone calls within 24 hours has been made by the department and shared with all resource families and staff. Foster ware parties are scheduled to begin January 2006. A family satisfaction survey and exit survey was completed to help the committee understand how to best support and retain foster parents. Data shows that the communities with the highest referral rates in San Bernardino County were also those with the most limited numbers of resource families. A targeted community grass roots approach to recruitment has begun, distributing literature in churches, community events, etc. There is a plan to implement a "Warmline" in Spring 2006. Letters of appreciation was also sent to all resource families. The Annual Resource Parent/Social Worker Team Conference will be held in April 2006 and the Foster Parent Appreciation Picnic will be in May 2006.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP): San Bernardino County has identified Community Partners who regularly participate in the TDMs and have strong partnerships with many churches, and community collaborative. The Director makes regular F2F presentations to each community's school board and City Counsel. A F2F Speaker's Bureau has been developed that includes foster parents, community partners and child welfare staff who regularly provide outreach presentations. There are brochures and promotional item "give aways" that reflect the

Twice a month, a "Taking Care of Business Days" is held to expedite and support the processing of applicants interested in becoming resource Families.

F2F philosophy. Training has been provided to at least 200 community partners and collaboratives

on the F2F philosophy and TDM community partner readiness. An Outreach Log has been created to track contacts made county-wide. F2F Implementation Liaisons have been identified in each of

the three regions of the county to assist in spreading the F2F philosophy to staff and community. All strategy workgroup and Steering committee meeting minutes are posted on the county intranet F2F site with action items in the minutes to track progress.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDMs were rolled-out at intake in the target region of Rialto in June 2005. TDM policy and procedures have been developed. TDM readiness training was given to staff and community partners. In an effort to address the disproportionality issue, TDM's are conducted for all African American infants age 0-1. TDMs are held at local churches and community centers when ever possible. The TDM workgroup is drafting Domestic Violence protocols for TDM's. The Desert region plans to implement TDM's in a small geographical region of Victorville, California in July 2006.

SELF EVALUATION: The Self-Evaluation team works on the AB636 data work group, SIP plan, as well as F2F outcomes. The group has been tracking the outcomes of children placed in their community of origin as well as siblings place together. The team is developing a system for tracking new resource families and assists with TDM data input. Recently the team has developed Data Fact Sheets to share with staff, resource families and the community to educate on the need to address safety, wellbeing and permanence for children and families in San Bernardino County. The workgroup has been instrumental in working with IST in developing a

new TDM web application as well.

PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER YOUTH: San Bernardino County established a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) in June 2005. The development of YAB was identified in the County's SIP as an improvement goal for improving outcomes for foster youth as they transition to adulthood. YAB meets two times per month and has over 32 active youth as regular

members. YAB promotes the participation of foster youth in policy development and legislative change to improve foster youth services. San Bernardino County has incorporated youth representatives on the RDS workgroup who assist with recruitment activities and training of Resource Families.

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

San Diego is the sixth largest county in the Country. The county developed an internal infrastructure with a F2F Agency Coordinator as the lead and a Regional Coordinator assigned in each of the six regional sites throughout the county. The faith community has been active in helping with recruitment and support efforts by offering their church facilities for speaking engagements and for foster parent support group meetings. Regional staff provides respite events, picnics/luncheons and award banquets for foster parents. San Diego has contracted with Community Services for Families (CSF) to provide more services to clients, including recruitment, retention, and participation in TDM meetings. Foster Parent PRIDE training is provided through the Community College System. Foster youth and adoptive parents are able to share their experiences at these trainings. Former foster youth also assist in the Independent Living Skills training for new social workers classes.

The Foster Friends Outreach Committee created the "8 Great Ways to Help" poster, flier, and power point presentation for a coordinated recruitment efforts. "Way Station" foster homes have been developed in all six county regions. Way Station homes allow children to remain in their own communities; thereby diverting children from the emergency shelter care facility.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP): The six Regional Coordinators and regional staff actively participate in recruitment activities such as community street fairs, speaking engagements at local churches and community events. Transitional housing resources are available with referrals from the ILS program and through community agencies such as the YMCA and San Diego Youth and Community Services. A supported housing program provides assistance to young adults transitioning from the Children's mental health system to the Adult mental health system with a focus on successful community

living. The Fostering Community Connections program housed at San Diego State University paired up foster youth interested in college with social work interns as mentors throughout the college application process. The foster youth receive college credits and become involved in community service through the program. Partnerships with schools have developed whereby a CWS social worker is assigned to handle referrals from particular schools. Other

examples of community activities include Kiwanis Club members providing respite for foster parents with space and activities in the East region, and staff attending community business association meetings in North Central and North Inland Regions.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM):

The TDM Protocol, policy and procedures, TDM readiness training and Facilitator training was completed in 2005. In January 2006, TDMs rolled-out in two identified regions. TDMs are starting with change of placement cases and will move on to permanency/reunification cases and removals during 2006/2007. TDMs will expand to other regional sites during 2006/2007.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit provides necessary data for regional recruitment planning and the F2F outcomes. QA staff is designing the TDM outcomes data package and will provide quarterly tracking. QA staff attends the F2F Guiding Group meetings and TDM work group meetings.

Riverside Co Dept of Public Social Services (F2F funding began in 2004)

Contact: Jewel Pabustan, F2F Coordinator, jepabust@riversidedpss.org

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RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF

RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS): CWS/CMS research of available resource families in January 2005 found 17 licensed foster and adoptive homes in the target area. After contact and engaging with these families, 6 were immediately ready to resume fostering; while the remaining required follow-up certification or re-training.

By January 2006, a total of 31 resource families (including adoptive homes), are now available in the target area – increasing by 82% over the 12-month period.

Over the course of the year, two new recruitment and support contractors continued their activities: one for “targeted recruitment” in the target area; the other for “24/7 peer support” for all the existing resource families. To ensure recruitment follow-up, a centralized inquiry telephone line with a “customer-friendly” script is now in place with a live person always answering all calls. In September 2005, placement supervisors began a 24-7 on-call rotation to provide additional support to resource families.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP):

Several, highly successful community-based forums were held that involved both traditional and nontraditional partners. Desert staff reached out to over 150 community members in the neighborhood including; the Police/Sheriff's Departments, local churches, schools, counselors, and neighborhood service programs. In preparation for TDMs in January 2006, the Metro region facilitated over 6 community partnership forums, involving more than 100 service providers and concerned citizens in the

area.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDM was launched in the Desert target area in October 2005. TDMs are being held for all initial removals or risk of removal in the target area, and will eventually progress to placement changes by December 2006. The TDM process helped to divert 5

families from the Juvenile Court system. As of January 2006, these families have not reentered our system.

In preparation for placement TDMs, select regions have included extended family members in meetings prior to placement changes. For example, the centralized Group Home unit is also requiring “placement save” meetings whenever a request to move a

child is received. Over the course of the year, extensive training around F2F strategies and TDM specifically included: 6 staff training events, with over 700 attendees; 6 community partner training, with over 100 attendees; and more than 10 partner outreach/education forums, with over 350 attendees.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): CWS/CMS reports are more accurate, and managers and supervisors continue to use these reports to: guide performance, share and explain data reports to staff and partners, and review geo-maps with internal and external stakeholders. Community and partner feedback continue to be integrated into the design of data presentations and reports. As of September 2005, two additional staff was hired in the Data Unit to expand capacity. In October 2005, Riverside's “user-friendly” one-page fact sheet with basic, relevant Children's Services data was completed and distributed to staff and partners.

Some comments from individuals who attended TDMs include; "Wish all of my clients could have a TDM", "We had an opportunity to do some real social work and assess the needs of the family", "Great experience", "I did not know what to expect"" "I was extremely impressed with the open and non-threatening, as well as understanding atmosphere, thank you", "A parent also shared, "I totally needed this"!

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF

RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS): Foster youth are now featured in the training of foster parents with positive response from prospective foster parents. Management regularly attends the foster parent association meeting. Many positive outcomes have resulted from this improved relationship with foster parents; several foster parents are now willing to participate in work groups, provide input upon request and serve as trainers and mentors to other foster parents. The partnership with the Ventura County Community College District has continued to develop. The foster parent training series is consistent with actual business practices. They have also assisted in new initiatives such as TDM and the upcoming Ice Breaker training. A specific effort with the faith-based community was made. Geographically based foster care information sessions along with an entire training series will occur within the next few months.

Support to resource families has improved with the hiring of a foster care ombudsman. The role of the ombudsman is to attend to concerns raised by foster parents. Foster parents can now call the ombudsman for information and request a home visit. The ombudsman is an active participant at TDM's when requested as a means of support for resource families attending.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP): There are unique differences and needs between the two geographical target areas so two independent CP groups were formed. Considerable time has been spent to identify and prioritize goals for the next year. Strategic relationships were established to mobilize existing resources such as the Family Resource Centers, located close to school sites that may serve as future TDM locations. An ongoing training plan is being developed collaboratively with the Foster and Kinship Care Education program with the local community college. The foster parent training was moved to a more convenient location so that they do not have to drive to the other side of the county to attend training.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): Ventura County began implementation of TDMs for all placement changes in October 2005. TDMs have been held in English, Spanish and one Mixteco. There has been participation from birth parents, resource families, and community partners invited by the family or the agency as well as staff. TDM training has been provided to Adult Children and Family staff, including program managers, supervisors, eligibility and clerical staff. Presentations have been held to orient resource families to the TDM process.

SELF EVALUATION (SE):

The TDM CA Version 2.6 database was installed and implemented to coincide with the mid-October 2005 rollout of TDM meetings for all placement changes. The process was a collaborative effort of the local TDM staff, staff of the Human Services

Agency Business and Technology Department and the TDM Support Team at CSSR, UC Berkeley. Ad hoc reports have been prepared for local TDM and F2F staff. Feedback surveys are being completed at the end of each TDM. A feedback session with staff is being planned in March as part of a 120-day review. Development is proceeding on a process for tracking each prospective foster parent from attendance at the local foster parent licensing program's initial orientation meeting to termination of the individual's license. The self-evaluation process continues to track the numbers of new licenses and license terminations and the net change in currently licensed homes each month. Self-evaluation continues to support targeted outreach efforts with local communities organization.

CLUSTER IV (7 Counties – Glenn, Humboldt, Placer, Sacramento, Solano, Tehama, and Trinity)

GLENN COUNTY

Glenn County Human Resource Agency (f2f funding began in 2004)

Contact: Chellie Gates, Program Manager, gates@cws.state.ca.us

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

In Spring 2005, the Glenn County RDS team held a resource family F2F training, which had great attendance. Childcare was provided at the training, as well as a catered lunch and door prizes. A RDS Speaker's Bureau was created to recruit resource families and has conducted approximately fifteen speaking engagements, primarily with civic organizations. The plan in 2006 is to expand to faith-based groups and school staff. The RDS team gave a holiday party to over 100 children, resource families and child welfare staff. AmeriCorps members are actively involved in all RDS activities.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

PARTNERSHIPS (BCP):

The Glenn County Children's Interagency Coordinating Council (CICC) functions as the Child Abuse Prevention Council and oversees children's services within the county. The executive body consists of the department heads from social services, probation, education, health, and the courts. The Child and Family Resource Network, which consists of all the community partners involved in children's services, operates as a subgroup of CICC and reports to that body. Glenn County has two Family Resource Centers and they are instrumental in providing community based services that support F2F strategies.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDMs were implemented in July 2005 at the front end (i.e. risk of removals and emergency removals, prior to detention hearing). Front end TDM's are challenging in order to meet the short timeframes.

However, front end TDM have helped meet the objectives of: early assessment for child safety, awareness of placement options (including remaining in the home) and early family involvement with community services. This early intervention strategy has reduced the number of juvenile court petitions and kept children at home in some instances, with the necessary services to keep them safe and protected. Two TDM facilitators were trained this year.

Glenn County became part of the Youth Transition Age Team (YTAT) in Summer 2005. This initiative is bringing in additional community partners, including business partners, to support foster youth with employment, education, and identifying supportive relationships towards independence.

SELF EVALUATION (SE):

Business Objects (CWS/CMS) reports and TDM data are reviewed as part of F2F. Glenn County is a federal SAMHSA grantee for Children's System of Care (CSOC). The research and data analysis from F2F and CSOC are useful in improving child welfare practice.

PERMANENCY AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER YOUTH:

Glenn County has an active Independent Living Program group and a California Youth Connection chapter. AmeriCorps members assisted in many foster youth activities in 2005. Former foster youth are part of the RDS Speaker's Bureau and their stories have become key to the presentations. Several former foster youth have held full-time positions within the agency. An Emancipation Conference protocol was completed in 2005 for foster youth beginning at age 15 ½ to begin to address permanence issues earlier. The plan is to have the protocol fully implemented in 2006 for all foster youth in the age range of 15 ½ to 19.

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF

RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS): Since implementing F2F, Humboldt County's recruitment efforts have become more comprehensive. The RDS group meets quarterly and maintains data on resource family recruitment via total number of calls received, number of attendees at orientation, hours of training attended, etc. The RDS group is targeting the zip codes where there has been a high removal rate for resource family recruitment. There are now more recruitment in rural regions, with orientation and training held in these communities. Group home placements have decreased and there is increased awareness to place siblings in the same school. Americorp workers at the Family Resource Centers, many located in schools, are assisting in recruitment efforts. Management has also begun meeting with local Tribal representatives to address the disproportion of Native American children being referred to child welfare services and placed in out-of-home care. Improved support to resource families include adding after-hours transportation; a mentorship program for foster/kinship parent; quarterly meetings with Foster Family Agencies; joint training with CWS staff and resource families; and an annual Foster Parent Appreciation Luncheon.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP):

TDMs have helped to create new community

partners and have deepened existing partnerships. The percentage of community representatives who attend Placement Change TDMs has increased from the initial 10% at rollout to 43% in the 4th Quarter. Service provider attendance has remained constant at about 60%.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDM roll-out began in May 2005. Most of the meetings have been for placement changes. In July, TDMs were implemented for reunification and in Jan 2006, TDMs began for imminent risk of placement and emergency placements.

Examples of Community Support

- *School staff offered to assist in driving a foster youth to school so that she could stay at the same school when she was placed out of district;*
- *A therapist working with a youth assisted a foster parent in arranging personal therapy to help support her in the care of the youth;*
- *A regional center staff helped a relative caregiver enroll her grandson into Head Start;*
- *A CASA case-manager partnered with a relative caregiver to help enroll her brother into a summer recreational program;*
- *A CASA volunteer assisted a foster parent in transporting a youth to after-school activities;*
- *School staff assist in an IEP so the youth could start to receive appropriate educational services;*
- *An Early Head Start teacher helped a grandparent caregiver enroll in parenting classes.*

SELF EVALUATION: The self-evaluation team has been rolled into the F2F leadership group. There has been regular data analysis on TDMs, placements, recruitment, licensing and information on school district areas where children have been removed.

PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER YOUTH:

In December 2005, Humboldt County implemented their California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP). During the second of six TA sessions with the CPYP consultant, more than 200 connections were identified for 12 youth. As a result of the searches, one male foster youth reconnected to his two brothers, one of whom lives

locally. More success stories are expected as searches for permanent connections for these youth continue.

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

The RDS team implemented a recruitment plan that includes increased efforts at churches, community festivals, and other events. The new Foster Family Recruitment Specialist has significantly increased recruitment efforts. Thousands of recruitment brochures have been distributed. The PRIDE training has been revised to include presentations by foster and emancipated youth, birth parents that have not reunified with their children, and resource parents. The PRIDE trainings are expanded to two communities, and classes are full. Communication with caseworkers has improved with improved e-mail access from resource families. In addition to an annual picnic to recognize caregivers, the new RAH program—Rewards, Appreciation, Honor—offers rewards for training attendance, and small prizes to recognize special efforts of resource families.

The relationship with resource parents has dramatically improved. The number of resource parents participating in family support groups has approximately tripled. An Icebreaker protocol has been developed, and staff and resource families from two Foster Family Agencies have been trained in the process.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP): The county's six Family Resource Centers are active in F2F and participate in the F2F Recruitment Work Group; employ an AmeriCorp worker as the Foster Family Recruiter; provide space for and participating in TDMs; and offer services to Resource families. Community partners are involved in youth permanency projects, participate in foster/adoptive parent events, and are active in Differential Response. Sierra Adoption Services and Placer County have a private/public partnership to recruit, train, and support resource parents.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDMs were initiated in July 2005 and implemented countywide in October. Reunification was the initial TDM implementation area as a strategy to reduce the rate of re-entry to foster care. AB636 data on placement rates informed the choice of placement

moves except permanency for the second phase of implementation, starting in March. To ensure that caseworkers schedule and convene TDMs for all placement decisions, additional staff training and a tracking system have been implemented. Training has also been provided to foster parents and community partners. Foster Family Agency and Group Home staff has been invited to two TDM trainings. After participating in a TDM, one caseworker declared, "This is why I'm a social worker."

SELF EVALUATION (SE): Self-evaluation is handled by the Child Welfare System Improvement Accountability Team. At each bi-monthly meeting, the Team reviews progress on AB636 outcomes and SIP, which incorporates most of the F2F strategies and activities. Baseline data on

removals and placements by neighborhood are being developed. They are also working with the Placer County Office of Education and individual schools to determine removals and placements by school district and by school attendance areas.

PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER YOUTH:

Working with Sierra Adoption Services, Destination Family is a new initiative emphasizing the involvement of youth ages 11 to 18 in finding a permanent family. The Placer Permanency Partners group has been meeting to provide direction in the area of youth driven permanency. In partnership with WholePerson Learning, a non-profit that handles Placer's ILP, a pilot youth mentor project protocol has been developed. The first emancipated foster youth was hired as a teen mentor. He has been active in a variety of county sponsored trainings and workgroups, and has attended local and national conferences. Emancipated foster youth participate in orientations and trainings for resource parents and staff training.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Sacramento Co Health & Human Serv Dept (F2F funding began in 2004)

Contact: Marian Kubiak, F2F Coordinator, kubiamb@saccounty.net

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

Recruitment efforts are focused on communities where the majority of children were coming into care but historically has had the least foster homes. PRIDE training was recently offered in both English and Spanish, utilizing the expertise of foster youth, birth parents and foster parents to educate new foster parents. As a result of the new recruitment strategy, 50 new resource homes were licensed. A Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner, a Foster Family Picnic, and the first annual Foster Parent Holiday Gala were held in appreciation of resource families.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

PARTNERSHIPS (BCP):

The third Annual Redesign Community Convening was held in November 2005 as a way to integrate F2F values into Redesign efforts. It was co-chaired by a birth parent and the Director of Children's Services and the overwhelming success encouraged Sacramento to hold convenings for both foster/kinship parents and youth in 2006. This group is also in the beginning stages of partnering with the faith-based organizations as well as other community partners, in order to further collaborative efforts and promote F2F strategies.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): After evaluating placement change data and considering program readiness, the decision was made to implement TDM's in Family Reunification with placement disruptions, using the Breakthrough Series Collaborative methodology to implement TDM. Sacramento is currently looking at staff readiness in the front-end programs and to expand TDM's to the second phase. Approximately 2/3 of all Foster Family Agencies in the County have been trained on TDM's, and Sacramento has been very

successful in having community partners participate in TDM meetings.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): Sacramento is using data to determine decisions regarding F2F implementation. The decision to start TDM in Family Reunification was a result of data analysis

to determine the area of greatest need. The F2F Core team is responsible for reviewing the F2F outcome data and aligning the information with AB636. The group meets monthly, and provides oversight and expertise to the other redesign workgroups to ensure outcome and system improvements are tracked adjusted

A gap was bridged during the TDM between the biological mother and the foster parent, Foster Family Agency staff, and the child's therapist. The mother was made a part of the team. At the end of the meeting the mother, with tears in her eyes, thanked everyone for letting her be part of the meeting. She finally felt included and connected to what was going on with her child.

- *Vignette from TDM Facilitator*

accordingly.

PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF FOSTER

YOUTH: Sacramento County has recently joined the California Permanency for Youth Project. A multidisciplinary team will review youth in care every six months in regards to permanency planning. Sacramento County's ILP is recognized statewide as a model. It was the first ILP in California to provide emancipation services for youth as young as 12. Emancipated foster youth participate on panels in the community and in numerous Child Protective Services (CPS) initiatives and workgroups. There is a youth advisory group called PAUSE (Paying Attention Using Self-Evaluation). A former foster youth facilitates an ILP workshop and provides feedback on program development. Sacramento County has adopted and trained its staff on the Statewide Youth Engagement Protocol. Two emancipated youth were hired to provide feedback to CPS, pilot testing on the use of the national Casey Life Skills Assessment Tool, and the expansion of Emancipation Conferences

Solano Co Health and Social Service Dept (F2F began 2005)

Contact: Lissette Shepherd, F2 F Coordinator, lshepherd@solanocounty.com

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF

RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS): Solano County has selected the city of Vallejo as the target recruitment area. Foster Parent pre-service training is now being offered in Vallejo. Solano is partnering with the Vallejo Family Resource Center for outreach and education to the general community, the faith-based community and community based organizations. The workgroup has developed a questionnaire for foster parents to assess current working relationships between social workers and foster parents. Joint training opportunities for social worker and foster parents are offered monthly. F2F trainings have also been offered to community partners and there is a kinship support group that meets weekly.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

PARTNERSHIPS (BCP): Solano County has developed a plan to build on the existing partnerships with the Family Resource Centers from the various cities across the county. Family Resource Centers will be used as vessels to develop grassroots partnerships within those communities and cities. Although Vallejo is the initial target area, Solano County has committed to nurturing relationships with the other cities. An all county roll-out plan is being developed along with a county-wide communication plan. In Vallejo, key faith-based and foster parent partners have been identified. A plan to outreach and develop non-traditional partnerships has been developed. Foster a Dream, an organization that provides additional supports to emancipated youth and youth currently receiving foster care services, is partnering to vitalize the county's youth advisory board. This partnership will also include youth involvement in the planning and implementation of Family to Family. Youth will participate in

trainings, presentations, workgroups and other outreach/education projects.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDM rollout is scheduled for October 2006. Solano County has reviewed the data and determined that TDMs will begin on the front-end and adopted the philosophy that "once a TDM family always a TDM family". As part of the planning process, cases will be examined to see how they flow from unit to unit and the responsibilities of social workers in each unit. TDM protocols and a systematic training plan for staff, foster parents, community providers are in the development phase. Staff will be visiting the TDM mentor county, San Luis Obispo County, to gain further perspective on the process.

Following a series of successful PDSA's (Plan- Do-Study- Act), Solano County has implemented Ice Breakers, which is called PIE (Parent Information Exchange) meetings.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): Solano County has prioritized drilling down the data to community and neighbor hoods specific. The target community is large and made up of numerous smaller close-knit

neighborhoods. In addition to the IT specialist, the workgroup includes Geographical Information System specialist so that we will be able to plot data for school readiness sites or from another identified focal point. The data on the 2005 Petitions filed for Vallejo has been disseminated to other work groups. A process for sharing reports on the intranet is being developed. A foster parent tracking tool has been developed to get a baseline understanding of the licensing process from the first telephone call through to placement. Data on the utilization rate of the current foster home in Vallejo is being gathered. Comparison on the homes available and the needs of the children coming into care is being analyzed.

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):

Tehama County has initiated a joint recruitment effort in collaboration with several local foster family associations. This partnership has been actively recruiting new resource families using a variety of techniques including bookmarks in libraries, flyers on pizza boxes and brochures. Tehama County is working to improve the relationships of social workers and foster parents. The F2F Coordinator attends the monthly meetings of the Foster & Adoptive Parent Association and a foster parent survey was recently conducted to analyze how to improve services. Recruitment will be an integral part of the speaker's bureau presentation being developed in conjunction with the BCP group. Foster youth and foster parents are a part of all of the county's PRIDE training.

The local Department of Education created a new position, hiring a Foster & Homeless Youth Services Coordinator who works closely with child welfare.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (CP):

Tehama County, seeking to improve their community's coordination, encouraged several local groups working on issues related to children and families, to merge with the county's BCP group. Tehama County has launched a Youth Transition Action Team that is focused on better preparing foster youth for adulthood by increasing coordination between child welfare, education and workforce development. A speaker's bureau is under development that will offer presentations throughout the county. In addition to informing the community about changes to the local child welfare system and F2F values, the presentations will serve as an opportunity for recruitment of resource families and community representatives for TDM. The community will also be kept informed about successes and data via a newsletter that is being initiated. Tehama County will assist in

the development of a Family Resource Center in their second largest city in the county. Differential Response has been implemented in collaboration with several community partners.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDMS for placement changes and exits began in July 2005. Protocols are currently being developed to expand to emergency and initial placements. There has been excellent attendance by foster parents and

the goal is to increase participation by community representatives. So far, caregivers have attended 96% of TDMs, family members/other interested individuals have attended 64%

of TDMs, community representatives have attended 19%, and service providers have been at 88% of TDMs. The quality of meetings and the efficiency of the scheduling process are regularly monitored and discussed so that revisions or changes can be made as needed. New protocols are being discussed for streamlining the scheduling process and increasing the consideration of educational needs.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): Tehama County's current self-evaluation team, consisting of both child welfare staff and community partners, meets quarterly, or as needed, to review data and inform other workgroups of progress. Other workgroups may request data information by way of a form submitted to the self-evaluation team who then coordinates the completion of the request. An awareness of data and its benefits is growing amongst child welfare staff and community partners. A new analyst has been assigned to the child welfare division that will allow for an even greater focus on data and self-evaluation.

**RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF
RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS):**

Trinity county is working to increase the number of foster families including faith-based outreach, direct advertising, direct mailings to foster families with training information, a mentoring program, a holiday event for foster children, improving information on the foster care web-site, providing parent partner training, providing a FAQ for social workers who work with foster families, increase placements with non related extended family members, and child care reimbursement for foster families, including birth and foster families.

Americorps workers are placed in schools to provide Track 1 responses and to act as a family advocate for families in those areas.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP): Using F2F strategies and based on the goals of their CWS improvement activities work plan, Trinity County has focused on developing closer partnerships with school districts in the more remote areas of the county. There is also an educational liaison from the county office of education in the Mid Level Management Team which is supervises F2F activities. Community partners attend TDMs and are very supportive.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): TDMs were implemented in June of 2005. The data collection process and forms/procedures are being streamlined and fine-tuned. TDMs have been extremely successful, with positive responses from families and community partners. Some difficulties have been the lack of a consistently available and adequate meeting space and the lack of adequate staff to act as the scheduler. Icebreaker meetings are currently in the planning phase.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): A Foster Parent Survey and a TDM survey has been developed. The results of these surveys are discussed in the strategy workgroups and shared with staff at unit meetings. The TDM report and the BSC report are also shared at unit meetings. An Emergency

Response customer satisfaction survey procedure is currently being implemented.

**PERMANENCE AND INVOLVEMENT
OF FOSTER YOUTH:**

Through concurrent planning and use of NREFM placements, Trinity

County has increased the longevity of many placements. Support and assistance to foster children has been improved through the ILP program and use of Americorps members as mentors and family advocates.

Los Angeles Cluster (Divided into Three Clusters)

Cluster 1 (SPA 1, 2, 3/ BSP Covina, Santa Clarita, Lancaster, Antelope Valley, No. Hollywood, Pasadena, Pomona)

Cluster 2 (SPA 4, 5, 6/BSP Wilshire, Wateridge, Hawthorne, Century, Compton, West LA, Metro North)

Cluster 3 (SPA 7, 8, Adoptions/Torrance, Lakewood, Santa Fe Springs, Belvedere)

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles Co Dept of Children & Family Svcs (f2f funding began in 1996)

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INTRODUCTION: Los Angeles County is one of the largest counties in the United States and represents approximately 36% of California's child welfare population.⁷ The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is broken up into eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) with 17 offices in total. In order to better coordinate F2F implementation, the eight LA County SPAs were divided into three F2F sub-clusters. Three conferences were held in January and February 2005 with child welfare staff from every office in Los Angeles to launch F2F countywide. Follow-up technical assistance was provided for each office by the AECF TA team. The second round of Building Community Partnership conferences in Los Angeles were held in the Fall, 2005.

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES (RDS): A five year recruitment plan was developed as the guiding recruitment tool for specialized targeted populations of adoptions (child-specific), cultural-religion-language, medical fragile, sibling and teens. The Recruitment Partnership Forum met quarterly to redefine, refine, and implement the five-year plan. Specific and updated written information about the target populations are now included in the orientation packets and made available as outreach information for community activities and events. In March 2004, DCFS

consolidated its foster care and adoption training and assessment process. All prospective resource parents are required to attend 33 hours of pre-service training and are approved at the adoption level. To meet the specific support issues of caregivers, each regional office in partnership with its' caregiver communities is authorized to develop and implement a caregiver friendly system to identify and resolve caregiver support needs. The DCFS Training Section assists with the planning and implementation of specific training issues for caregivers identified by the DCFS offices. On February 7, 2006, a Recruitment, Development and Support (RDS) conference for DCFS managers is scheduled to assist with targeted planning and implementation.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (BCP): The countywide regional offices sponsored a variety of community events. Activities included community 'meet and greet' (bridging the gap) forums; F2F Initiative overviews; development and support of parent, youth and community advisory council meetings, community resource fairs, linkages for TDM meetings; faith-based forums; community appreciation and recognition events. Future activities include: information videos about DCFS, grant writing partnerships, creation of resource/data specific guides about local communities, and more community resource fairs to meet specific needs (e.g., medical resources, education resources, support groups). Strong emphasis by various offices has been given to transitioning and emancipating youth who require targeted outreach and specialized efforts for successful emancipation.

⁷ Information from UC Berkeley, Center for Social Service Research - <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports/Pointintime/fostercare/childwel/prevsFrameset.asp?whichForm=&data=data&pyear=jul2004>

TEAM DECISIONMAKING (TDM): As of July 2005, TDMs is operational in all DCFS offices. The policy is available through the Department's LAKIDS intranet website. The Department's Training Section and the Inter University Consortium (IUC) are collaborating in developing advanced training for TDM facilitators. A standardized TDM brochure, published in English and Spanish, is being field tested in the community and agency staff. The Department was recently given the authority to hire an additional 36 TDM facilitators, bringing the total number of TDM Facilitators to 62. The F2F TA team will work with DCFS on a strategic plan for training and increased implementation of the meetings. On October 18, AECF TAs has trained managers from every LA office on F2F and more specifically on TDM. The training was well received and the offices have requested similar additional trainings. The TDM Application Database has been implemented and is now available to TDM facilitators for easy access on the Department's LA Kids intranet website. In March 2005, a DCFS Information Systems Team developed a web-based tool for the input of data from all completed TDM forms and for the direct

input of data when TDM conferences were in progress. The same group developed a set of automatically generated reports on the DCFS Intranet that would allow office and program staff to monitor data on TDM conferences by time period, office and by the various categories from the TDM form.

SELF EVALUATION (SE): SE workgroups are in full operation in the DCFS Pomona office and in Service Planning Area (SPA) I, which covers the Lancaster and Palmdale DCFS offices. Along with the F2F Initiative's desired outcomes, the Pomona workgroup has focused on tracking children placed in group homes for over 12 months and surveying youth 14 years and older about identifying their needs in meeting successful emancipation. In keeping with strategic planning, the SPA 1 SE workgroup is seeking raw and baseline data from the ITS section of DCFS, operational definitions for data analysis and how to measure outcomes that are distinguished from value driven principles.